

# PUBLIC WORKS INITIATIVE COMMITTEE (PWIC)

**CHARGE AND MEMBERSHIP** (Approved by the Board of Selectmen: December 14, 2010)

The name of the committee shall be the Public Works Initiative. Membership will include voting representatives from the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Library Trustees, Finance Committee, Conservation Commission, Water Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and Council on Aging with voting staff representation from the Assistant Town Manager, for a total of 9 members, appointed for a three-year term by the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen’s representative will act as chair pro tem.

The charge to the committee will be to work with all policy boards<sup>1</sup> to carry forward the plan developed by the ad hoc Public Works Committee, dated March 2010. The committee will be responsible for further refining the plan steps, developing additional concepts and recommending implementation actions, according to the Public Works policies adopted by the Board of Selectmen on February 2010. Quarterly summaries, assessing the effectiveness<sup>2</sup> of implementation steps taken, will be provided to the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and Master Plan Implementation Committee<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>policy boards – effort will be made to facilitate discussion with all boards and department heads

<sup>2</sup>effectiveness - defined as a benefit to residents in terms of cost reduction or service level improvement

<sup>3</sup>Master Plan Implementation Committee – participation of a non voting liaison is encouraged by the Board of Selectmen

**PUBLIC WORKS VISION STATEMENT**

Westford prides itself in its ability to provide superior community services to its residents. In order to continue public services far into the future in an ever-changing fiscal environment, Westford recognizes the requirement to improve efficiencies and economies.

Westford will provide the highest quality and responsive, municipal level of service in the most cost efficient and effective manner taking advantage of economies of scale across its infrastructure through proper utilization of assets, procurement, maintenance, application of new technologies and personnel.

**PUBLIC WORKS MISSION STATEMENT**

Westford's departments are dedicated to delivering high quality operational services in a responsive and cost efficient manner in support of the Town's residents, boards, committees and commissions through a workforce that is highly motivated and empowered in ensuring the safety and effectiveness of all its infrastructure and assets.

**PUBLIC WORKS POLICIES**

**Policy 1. Service Level and Cost Benefit**

In order to deliver a desired public works level of service, escalating cost factors must be effectively managed to meet expectations of residents, ensure compliance with all applicable laws, direct discretionary funding to where it is needed most and allow for new initiatives or service enhancements. The Departments with oversight from the Town Manager's and Superintendent of Schools office will track and evaluate the value of internal and external service level on a continuous basis.

**Policy 2. Comparisons**

Decision-makers need to recognize the appropriate use of market baskets because statistical analyses between towns do not accurately reflect service levels and cost. At times, too much credibility is placed on market basket town comparisons by Town Meeting, therefore changes proposed by Town Management will be evaluated on a basis of value provided for any service level within Westford. After the evaluation is completed, market baskets may be used to ensure Westford is comparable to other towns.

**Policy 3. Resource Sharing**

Delivering Town shared resources to a job will be facilitated without adding significant bureaucratic overhead to ensure that all department needs are equitably served by establishing a centralized scheduling system including cross charges, with a coordinated assignment and scheduling of staff and equipment, by the Department Heads with oversight by the Town Manager and School Superintendent.

**Policy 4. Organizational Continuity**

Volunteer boards, committees and commissions contribute a wealth of experience from institutional knowledge, performance standards and expertise in Massachusetts General Law and federal law without whose input the Town may suffer a loss in service level, public relations and control. The Board of Selectmen will see that volunteer contributions are valued by limiting reorganization, consolidation, abolishment, creation, merger or division of boards, committees or commissions during the public works evaluation period.

**Policy 5. Priorities**

Dedicated department resources ensure a responsive allocation of in-house service, but may lead to isolated decision-making, imbalanced resources, higher cost and loss of general public safety. Prior to the consolidation of any function, service or department, the Department Heads, with the approval of the Town Manager and School Superintendent, will establish a system of service priorities.

**Policy 6. Maintenance Standards**

A lack of capital maintenance standards leads to inconsistency in scheduling, cost and staffing determinations and long term budgeting. The Department Heads with oversight by the Town Manager's and Superintendent of Schools office will establish appropriate standards, including but not limited to maintenance, replacement, and useful life cycles of Town assets.

**Policy 7. Performance Standards**

Without physical and financial resources, volunteer boards, committees and commissions are limited in their ability to maintain service levels leading to inequities across boards, increasing capital costs and a decline in general public safety. Minimum performance standards for all Town assets will be developed by the Department Head, with oversight by the policy making board, committee or commission.

**Policy 8. Personnel**

The Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools will promote an open and transparent process for proposed organizational changes through active participation and frequent communication, to maintain a high level of trust among volunteers and staff.